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Action

Control: 17952  
Rec'd: OCTOBER 24, 1962  
9:24 PM

SS  
Info

FROM: MOSCOW

State Dept. review completed

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 1070, OCTOBER 25, 2 AM

NI ACT

POLICY

EYES ONLY

FOLLOWING IS EMBASSY'S TRANSLATION LETTER FROM KHRUSHCHEV TO PRESIDENT RECEIVED BY MESSENGER FROM FOREIGN OFFICE AT 11:30 PM MOSCOW TIME.

BEGIN TEXT

DEAR MR PRESIDENT:

I HAVE RECEIVED YOUR LETTER OF OCTOBER 23, FAMILIARIZED MYSELF WITH IT AND AM ANSWERING YOU.

IMAGINE, MR PRESIDENT, THAT WE HAD POSED TO YOU THOSE ULTIMATIVE CONDITIONS WHICH YOU HAVE POSED TO US BY YOUR ACTION. HOW WOULD YOU HAVE REACTED TO THIS? I THINK THAT YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN INDIGNANT AT SUCH A STEP ON OUR PART. AND THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN COMPREHENSIBLE TO US.

HAVING POSED THESE CONDITIONS TO US, YOU, MR PRESIDENT, HAVE CHALLENGED US. WHO ASKED YOU TO DO THIS? BY WHAT RIGHT HAVE YOU DONE THIS? OUR RELATIONS WITH THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA, LIKE OUR RELATIONS WITH OTHER STATES, REGARDLESS OF WHAT SORT OF STATE IT MAY BE, CONCERN ONLY THE TWO COUNTRIES BETWEEN WHICH THOSE RELATIONS EXIST. AND IF ONE IS REALLY GOING TO TALK ABOUT

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A QUARANTINE, REFERRED TO IN YOUR LETTER, IT CAN BE ESTABLISHED, ACCORDING TO ACCEPTED INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE, ONLY BY THE AGREEMENT OF STATES BETWEEN THEMSELVES, AND NOT BY ANY SORT OF THIRD PARTY, THERE EXIST, FOR EXAMPLE, QUARANTINES ON AGRICULTURAL GOODS AND PRODUCTS. BUT IN THE CASE AT HAND, THE QUESTION IS IN NO WAY ONE OF QUARANTINE, BUT RATHER OF FAR MORE SERIOUS THINGS, AND YOU YOURSELF UNDERSTAND THIS.

YOU, MR PRESIDENT, ARE NOT DECLARING QUARANTINES, BUT ADVANCING AN ULTIMATUM AND THREATENING THAT UNLESS WE SUBORDINATE OURSELVES TO YOUR DEMANDS, YOU WILL USE FORCE. CONSIDER WHAT YOU ARE SAYING! AND YOU WISH TO CONVINCE ME TO AGREE TO THIS! WHAT DOES AGREEMENT WITH SUCH DEMANDS MEAN? THIS WOULD MEAN TO GUIDE ONESELF IN ONE'S RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES NOT BY REASON BUT TO INDULGE ARBITRARINESS. YOU ARE NO LONGER APPEALING TO REASON, BUT WISH TO INTIMIDATE US.

AND, MR PRESIDENT, I CANNOT AGREE WITH THIS AND THINK THAT IN YOUR HEART YOU RECOGNIZE THAT I AM CORRECT. I AM CONVINCED. THAT IN MY PLACE YOU WOULD ACT THE SAME WAY.

REFERENCE TO THE DECISION OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES CANNOT IN ANY WAY SUBSTANTIATE THE DEMANDS NOW ADVANCED BY THE UNITED STATES. THIS ORGANIZATION HAS ABSOLUTELY NO AUTHORITY OR BASIS TO MAKE DECISIONS LIKE THAT OF WHICH YOU SPEAK IN YOUR LETTER.

CONSEQUENTLY, WE DO NOT RECOGNIZE THESE DECISIONS. INTERNATIONAL LAW EXISTS, GENERALLY RECOGNIZED NORMS OF CONDUCT EXIST. WE FIRMLY SUPPORT THE PRINCIPLES OF INTERNATIONAL LAW, STRICTLY OBSERVE THE NORMS REGULATING NAVIGATION ON THE HIGH SEAS AND IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS. WE OBSERVE THESE NORMS AND ENJOY THE RIGHTS RECOGNIZED BY ALL STATES.

YOU WISH TO COMPEL US TO RENOUNCE THE RIGHTS THAT EVERY SOVEREIGN STATE ENJOYS, YOU ARE ATTEMPTING TO LEGISLATE IN QUESTIONS OF INTERNATIONAL LAW, YOU ARE TRAMPLING UPON THE

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GENERALLY ACCEPTED NORMS OF THIS LAW. AND ALL THIS NOT ONLY OUT OF HATRED FOR THE CUBAN PEOPLE AND ITS GOVERNMENT, BUT ALSO AS A RESULT OF CONSIDERATIONS OF THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN IN THE USA. WHAT MORALITY, WHAT LAW CAN JUSTIFY SUCH AN APPROACH BY THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT TO INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS? YOU CANNOT FIND SUCH A MORALITY AND SUCH A LAW, BECAUSE THE ACTIONS OF THE USA WITH REGARD TO CUBA ARE OUTRIGHT BANDITRY, OR, IF YOU LIKE, THE FOLLY OF DEGENERATE IMPERIALISM. UNFORTUNATELY THE PEOPLES OF ALL COUNTRIES, AND AT LEAST OF ALL THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, CAN SUFFER GRAVELY FROM SUCH FOLLY, SINCE THE USA HAS FULLY LOST ITS FORMER INACCESSABILITY WITH THE ADVENT OF CONTEMPORARY TYPES OF ARMAMENT.

CONSEQUENTLY, MR. PRESIDENT, IF YOU COOLY WEIGH THE SITUATION WHICH HAS DEVELOPED, NOT GIVING WAY TO PASSIONS, THEN YOU WILL UNDERSTAND THAT THE SOVIET UNION CANNOT FAIL TO REJECT THE ARBITRARY DEMANDS OF THE USA. WHEN YOU CONFRONT US WITH SUCH CONDITIONS, TRY TO PUT YOURSELF IN OUR SITUATION AND THINK HOW THE USA WOULD REACT TO THESE CONDITIONS. I DO NOT DOUBT THAT IF SOMEONE HAD ATTEMPTED TO DICTATE CONDITIONS OF THIS SORT TO YOU, THE USA, YOU WOULD HAVE REJECTED SUCH AN ATTEMPT. AND WE ALSO SAY -- NO.

THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT CONSIDERS THAT VIOLATION OF FREEDOM OF THE USE OF INTERNATIONAL WATERS AND INTERNATIONAL AIR SPACE IS AN ACT OF AGGRESSION, PUSHING MANKIND TOWARDS THE ABYSS OF A WORLD MISSILE-NUCLEAR WAR. CONSEQUENTLY, THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT CANNOT GIVE INSTRUCTIONS TO THE CAPTAINS OF SOVIET VESSELS BOUND FOR CUBA TO OBSERVE THE INSTRUCTIONS OF THE AMERICAN NAVAL FORCES BLOCKADING THAT ISLAND. YOUR INSTRUCTION TO SOVIET MARINERS ARE STRICTLY TO OBSERVE THE GENERALLY RECOGNIZED NORMS OF NAVIGATION IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS AND NOT TO RETREAT FROM THEM BY EVEN ONE STEP. AND IF THE AMERICAN SIDE VIOLATES THESE RULES, IT MUST REALIZE WHAT SORT OF RESPONSIBILITY WILL REST ON IT IN THAT CASE. OF COURSE, WE SHALL NOT BE SIMPLY OBSERVERS OF PIRATICAL ACTIONS OF

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AMERICAN SHIPS ON THE HIGH SEAS. WE WILL THEN BE FORCED FOR OUR PART TO TAKE THE MEASURES WHICH WE DEEM NECESSARY AND ADEQUATE IN ORDER TO PROTECT OUR RIGHTS. FOR THIS WE HAVE ALL THAT IS NECESSARY.

.. RESPECTFULLY YOURS,

/s/ N. KHRUSHCHEV

KOHLER

GDW

NOTE: RELAYED TO CIA, WHITE HOUSE, SECRETARY MCNAMARA AND CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF, TREASURY AND JUSTICE DEPARTMENT 10/24/62 PER SS.

NOTE: ADVANCE COPIES TO SS 10/24/62 CWO-M.

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